

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-16

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FM USINT ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1094

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TAGS: BTRA, ETRD, EFIN, AG

SUBJ: TRAVEL OF U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OFFICIALS

REFS: (A) STATE 175240 (B) ALGIERS 1836

1. U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VISIT TO ALGIERS
SEPTEMBER 1 AND 2 PRODUCED MIXED BUT OVERALL FAVORABLE
RESPONSE.

2. SECRETARY-GENERAL MOURAD CASTEL OF MINISTRY OF
INDUSTRY AND ENERGY MADE CLEAR ALGERIA SUPPORTS
CONTACTS AT ALL LEVELS TO HELP BUILD UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN ARABS AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. HE THOUGHT
QUADRIPARTITE MEETING OF TOP BUSINESS OFFICIALS
SOUNDED VERY GOOD, BUT QUESTIONED WHETHER AGENDA
COULD BE DRAWN UP AND PARTICIPANTS PREPARED FOR
NOVEMBER MEETING.

3. CASTEL THEN ARRANGED MEETINGS WITH SEVERAL NATIONAL
COMPANY PRESIDENTS, HADJADJ-AOU OF SONELEC, LIASSINE
OF SNS AND MALEK OF SN.METAL, WHO ALL PARROTED SIMILAR
WORDS OF INTEREST AND APPROVAL. SONATRACH OFFICIALS
WERE UNFORTUNATELY UNAVAILABLE.

4. CALDWELL AND USINT OFFICER THEN VISITED AOUI-
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF MINISTRY OF FINANCE, WHO WAS
FRANKLY HOSTILE TO THE WHOLE IDEA. AOUI ARGUED
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ALGERIA HAD NO PRIVATE SECTOR TO MEET WITH PRIVATE

COMPANIES FROM DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. ALGERIA WAS WORKING AHEAD ON BILATERAL LEVEL AND DID NOT HAVE TIME TO WORK ON SLOWER, UNPRODUCTIVE MULTILATERAL LEVEL. FINALLY, ALGERIA KNEW WHERE IT WAS GOING, HAD A FOUR-YEAR PLAN AND WAS AHEAD OF THE OTHER MIDDLE EASTERN/ARAB COUNTRIES AND IT DID NOT WISH TO GET BOGGED DOWN WITH THEM. IN SUM AOUI MADE A CLEAR ARGUMENT THAT ALGERIA CAME FIRST AND THAT WAS HIS ONLY INTEREST. ALGERIA MUST GET IN ITS ORDERS BEFORE IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA BOUGHT EVERYTHING UP.

5. ASSUMING USUAL POWER PLAY, U.S. CHAMBER REP. CALDWELL LEFT ALGIERS SATISFIED WITH TRIP AND THAT HE HAD ALGERIAN BLESSING IN GENERAL FOR QUADRIPARTITE MEETING. CASTEL WAS TO HAVE TELEPHONED NAMES OF SPECIFIC PARTICIPANTS, BUT SO FAR NONE HAVE BEEN FORTHCOMING DESPITE CALLS.
PELLETREAU

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